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Gas and Oil Regulation Changes Effective November 12, 1998

Richmond, VA--Amendments to regulations governing the permitting, operation, plugging, and site restoration of gas and oil exploration and development wells, gathering pipelines and associated facilities will become effective November 12, 1998, the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) announced today.

The amendments, which were published in the Virginia Register of Regulations on October 12, 1998, incorporate recommendations resulting from the Executive Order 15 review conducted to reduce burdensome requirements. Changes to the regulations also reflect public comments and legislative changes to the Virginia Gas and Oil Act.

Amendments to the regulations address administrative procedures for plugging of wells; DMME flexibility in handling cases when gas is found in holes not permitted as gas wells; information required in well permit applications; requirements for listing how risks to public safety, well site and adjacent lands are to be managed by the operator; changes to public notice requirements for permit transfers; waiver of the 15-day period for objections to permit applications; time limits for use of temporary signs and elimination of duplicative requirements for signs for gathering pipelines; the time-line for filling in pipeline trenches; clarification of standards for water used in well drilling; safe industry practices for use of well casing; and the location of wells and pipelines to inhabited buildings.

Copies of the regulations may be obtained from B. Thomas Fulmer, Division Director, Division of Gas and Oil, Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, 230 Charwood, P.O. Box 1416, Abingdon, VA 24212, telephone (276) 676-5423.

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